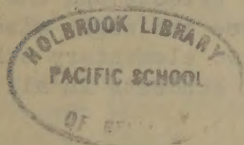


## JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

PUBLISHED BIMONTHLY BY NATIONAL CHRISTIAN COUNCIL OF JAPAN  
Editorial Committee Helen Post-- Stanley Manierre-- Akiko Yamaguchi



No. 335 - December 10, 1968

## IN THIS ISSUE:

Churches Anticipate Okinawa's Return to Japan  
Christmas Gifts for Miyakojima  
Churches Lag in Response to Urbanization  
Lutherans Survey Mass Media Habits  
Foreign Laymen Try to Clarify Their Role

CHURCHES ANTICIPATE OKINAWA'S RETURN TO JAPAN

The Okinawa Islands, green isles of the south of Japan, are the setting today of a highly crisis-charged problem, centering in the return of the islands to Japanese administration.

Since the end of World War II, Okinawa has been under the military control of the United States. Its economy rests mainly on the military base "industry" and a few agricultural products like sugar and yams. But the people are now looking forward to the day--"within a few years"--when control will be returned to Japan, according to promises made by both the United States and Japanese governments.

Acting in advance of the governments, however, the Christian churches have already taken steps toward a united church life.

The United Church of Christ in Japan (Kyodan) approved union with the United Church of Christ in Okinawa at its General Assembly in October. In November, the United Church of Christ in Okinawa, in an emergency General Assembly, likewise gave full support to the union, raising a banner that read "The First General Assembly, Okinawa District, The United Church of Christ in Japan" as soon as the results of the vote were announced. Formal inauguration services for the new district will be held in March after the ceremony of union February 25 at Ginza Church, Tokyo.

The Episcopal Church in Okinawa, which had been a diocese of Hawaii for the past twenty years, became a "mission diocese" of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America in January, 1968, with the recognition that it would become a diocese of the Japan Episcopal Church in ten years. Aiming at active cooperation immediately, the two churches have formed a joint committee for cooperation. At its first meeting representatives sought concrete ways to cooperate, including personnel exchange, lay training, and expression of the church's stand on political issues.

Baptist Churches in Okinawa form the Okinawa Baptist Association, an independent body.

In a total population of approximately one million, Protestants number 11,830 member, Catholics, 4,599. Baptists have 2,508 members; Episcopalians, 1,967; the United Church, 1,781; the Okinawa Christian Mission, 1600.

The Catholic Church has eleven parishes and nine mission stations, staffed by 22 Capuchin Friars, 2 Japanese priests and one secular missionary priest. Of the 57 sisters, 49 are Japanese and eight missionaries. The Catholic church also has a high school, two elementary schools and ten kindergartens, enrolling a total of 3,541 students in all.

#### "GIFTS OF LOVE" FOR MIYAKOJIMA

"Christmas gifts for Miyakojima", the typhoon-stricken Okinawan island, will be sent by children in church schools and Christian schools in Japan in this year's Christmas Project, sponsored by the NCC Department of Interchurch Aid and Service.

The Miyakojima typhoon in September not only damaged many homes, it also destroyed the sugar cane, which is the island's main industry. Damage is reported to have reached 280 million-yen (\$7.7 million).

Even before the typhoon swept across the face of the island, the life of the Okinawan people, especially the children, had aroused sympathy because of the island's poor economy, in contrast to that of mainland Japan, from which they are isolated physically, politically and economically.

The academic level of junior high school boys and girls is reported to be lower than that of mainland Japanese children. Rev. Kentaro Buma, General Secretary of the Department of Interchurch Aid and Service, found on his recent visit to the Okinawa Islands that only a few of the students in the Miyakojima Junior High School English class had English-Japanese dictionaries, and there were almost no study materials in the elementary school library, which had been damaged by typhoon flood waters.

The appeal to the students in Christian schools and church schools asks the church in Japan to contribute small gifts of their unseen Okinawan friends suggesting that three pencils, two notebooks, and a book--even a used one--be put into a bag made from a hand towel.

The Department of Interchurch Aid and Service is also raising 2 million yen (\$5,555) to be used to buy other books and for shipping costs. Donations will be accepted at the Tokyo NCC offices until the end of January.

#### CHURCHES LAG IN RESPONSE TO URBANIZATION

Japanese churches are not "anti-urban" an Episcopalian urban sociologist told a NCC Consultation on Urbanism and Evangelism recently, but many of them fail to take a positive and ecumenical approach to meeting its problems.

Prof. Hiroshi Ushikubo, St. Paul's University, told members of the Consultation who met at the Oiso Japan Academy House, November 26-28, that Japanese churches tend to react in one of three ways:

1. Some are pro-urbanization, holding an optimistic attitude toward it and becoming completely absorbed in the process.

2. Some recognize the process of urbanization, while not negative toward it, are critical because of the problems that accompany it and their attempts to build the "new community" in it.
3. Some accept urbanization but insist on trying to face it with traditional denominationalism.

Professor Yoshinobu Kumazawa, Tokyo Union Theological Seminary, reminded his listeners that "Mission is not the mission of man, nor is it the mission of the church, it is the mission of God, in which all Christians should join together."

The consultation was held in line with the recommendation of the NCC Consultation on Mission in Unity in March 1967 that urban-industrial mission be given special attention as an appropriate arena for joint action in mission. Regarding the future role of the NCC in promoting cooperation in urban-industrial witness, participants requested further efforts to establish better communication among themselves as well as between Japan and the churches of the East Asia Christian Conference and the World Council of Churches. The importance of letters, translations, reports and other publication was cited.

In broader context, both the "Good Samaritan" role, in responding to the needs of victims of rapid industrialization and urbanization, and the "Prophet" role were identified.

Dr. Herbert Gezork, guest lecturer in Christian Social Ethics at Kanto Gakuin Theological Seminary, gave Biblical insights on man in urban society and urged ecumenical activity to meet the challenge of urbanization.

#### SURVEY LUTHERANS' MASS MEDIA "MIND"

"What newspapers do you read?" "What are your three favorite TV shows?" "How many movies have you seen in the last year?"

Lutherans throughout Japan have been asked to reveal their viewing and reading habits in a study of mass media attitudes and practices conducted by the Lutheran World Federation Broadcasting Service Tokyo Office. An extensive 8-page questionnaire, prepared in cooperation with the Social Behavior Research Institute, a private Tokyo agency, was distributed during the month of November. Results will be reported early in 1969.

"Although the church's use of mass media is aimed at people outside the church," says Broadcasting Service Director George Olson, "the survey will help give church members a sense of participating in planning the church's media work."

#### FOREIGN LAYMEN LOOK AT THEIR ROLE

Foreign laymen met with Japanese laymen, missionaries and pastors of English-speaking and German-speaking churches in Tokyo December 3 to discuss how Christians from another country can cooperate with the Christians of the land in which they are living and working. Participants included representatives from Tokyo Union Church, the German Evangelical Church. St. Alban's Episcopal Church, a Catholic Japanese laymen's organization, and the Japanese Friends Meeting.

Dr. H. Gezork, visiting professor at Kanto Gakuin, emphasized the laymen's role today, saying "The Christian, as a member of the 'people of God,' should witness in his profession. In his daily life in the secular world, he should be responsible for re-establishing relationships between the church and society, including its economic and political sectors.

But, responded the laymen, the church is still clergy-centered and exclusive; thus, it is rather puzzling to the business or professional man as to what it is what he is to do.

Another subject that found its way naturally into discussions was the matter of relationships between Japanese and Westerners in Japan.